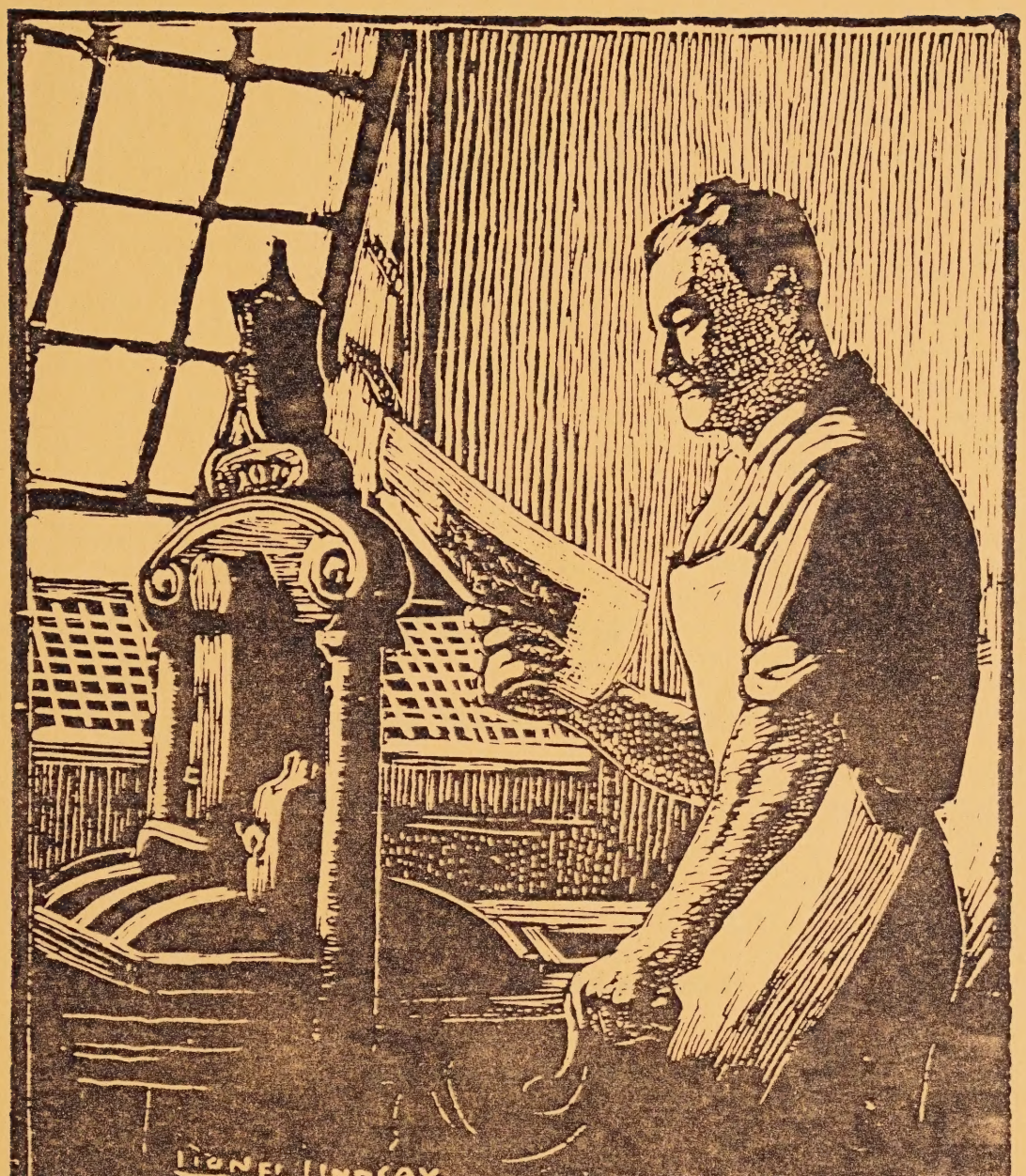


# THE BLACK ART

## An exhibition of British private press books

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library September - October 1983

# THE BLACK ART:

AN EXHIBITION OF

BRITISH PRIVATE PRESS BOOKS

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1983

HELD AT THE

THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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# INTRODUCTION

After William Caxton printed the first book in England in 1477, there were few technical developments in printing until the nineteenth century. The typesetting, imposition, inking and binding were all done by hand and the press was hand operated. Although there were a few private presses in the latter half of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the private press movement only became established after the founding of the Kelmscott Press in 1891. Its foremost aim was to produce fine books with the best quality material using traditional methods. This was a reaction against poorly made, mass produced books which were a legacy of the machine age. Today, almost a century later, the operation of private presses has changed little. Some may have dispensed with the hand press, and in some cases type may be machine set with final adjustments by hand, but methods are still comparable to those of the fifteenth century.

The different aims of the presses are apparent in the books displayed in the exhibition. The printers in the Nineties and early twentieth century printed books which were examples of fine printing, experimenting with the use of type, layout and illustration. Later the printers supported literary revivals or the printing of poetry and prose ignored by the commercial press. In the mid twentieth century printers used their presses to make social and political statements or to rebel against contemporary literary fashion. Some presses were meant to be no more than a hobby, while others were to provide a living. Whatever his aims, the private press owner is committed to select, design, set, print and often bind his products himself or closely supervise those who do it for him. Private press books are a tribute to the printers' imagination, creativity, patience and hard work.

The books in this exhibition represent only a small sampling of the Thomas Fisher Library's collection of British private press books. The arrangement of the exhibition is generally chronological beginning with Kelmscott in 1891 up to the present time.

CASE I

KELMSCOTT PRESS (1891-1898)

When William Morris founded the Kelmscott Press in 1891, he had already gained public recognition as a poet, prose romancer, painter and designer. Although he had long been interested in the art of printing, his friendship with the well-known printer Emery Walker provided the catalyst Morris needed. Before printing his first book, Morris thoroughly investigated all the technical aspects of printing, attempting wherever possible to reproduce the materials and quality of print of the fifteenth century books he most admired. He experimented with inks, paper, vellum, and types. He ordered his ink from Janecke & Schneeman of Hanover and his paper was a duplication of the Bolognese paper of 1473 made for him by Joseph Batchelor. Morris designed three types: Golden type, a roman letter based on a face used by Nicholas Jenson in 1470 and another by Jacques Le Rouge; the Gothic large Troy and the smaller Chaucer types (two sizes of the same design). In December 1889 he asked Emery Walker to be his partner in the Press and although Walker declined he nevertheless remained the éminence grise. Morris then hired a retired master printer, William Bowden to act as compositor and run the Albion Press, designing the layout of the books himself and drawing their intricate borders with lightning speed. Edward Burne-Jones designed the elaborate woodcuts. The books from the Kelmscott Press varied: some were small pocket books very simple in design; others were highly decorated folios. All were simply bound in blue paper boards or vellum. Morris founded his press "with the hope of producing some (books) which would have a definite claim to beauty, while at the same time they should be easy to read and should not dazzle the eye, or trouble the intellect of the reader by eccentricity of forms in the letters."[1] These were books such as the late Victorians had never seen before.

The Kelmscott Press ceased operation in 1898, eighteen months after Morris's death. In its seven years of existence it had printed 18,235 copies of fifty-three books and had made a £50,000 turn over. No small achievement for a little typographical adventure, initiated by an elderly man in failing health. Many of the critics, both then and now, did not think that Morris achieved his aims because his books were hard to read and even harder to open. The Kelmscott Press had little if any influence on the book design of the twentieth century. Morris's great contributions to the private press movement were his research into printing techniques and materials, and the standards of printing excellence his books encouraged others to emulate.

Morris, William. The Earthly Paradise. Vol. 1. [Hammersmith], Printed by W. Morris at the Kelmscott Press, 1896.

Printed in Golden type, black and red. The first book printed on the paper with the apple water-mark. None of the ten borders used in The Earthly Paradise appear in any other book. Bound in limp vellum.

1. William Morris. A Note by William Morris on His Aims in Founding the Kelmscott Press. (Hammersmith, 1898) p. 1.

Morris, William. A Note by William Morris on His Aims in Founding the Kelmscott Press. [Hammersmith, At the Kelmscott Press, 1898].

Printed in Golden, Troy and Chaucer types, black and red. Woodcuts by Edward Burne-Jones. This was the last book printed at the Kelmscott Press.

ASHENDENE PRESS (1894-1935)

One of the earliest followers of Kelmscott was the Ashendene Press, started by C.H. St. John Hornby in 1894. Hornby was a partner in W.H. Smith's and part of his apprenticeship had been served in the company's printing works. He decided that, for a man who loved books and working with his hands, printing was an ideal hobby. He set up a press in the garden house of his parents's estate, Ashendene, in Hertfordshire. With the help of his sisters, Hornby printed the first eleven books, usually working on Sunday mornings. In 1900 he moved to Shelley House in Chelsea where he continued to do much of the printing himself, never hiring more than one printer and compositor. Hornby was a friend of Sydney Cockerell, and through him, met Emery Walker. Cockerell and Walker persuaded Hornby to have a proprietary type face cut. In 1900, E.P. Prince cut Subiaco modelled on the type used by the German printers Sweynheym and Pannartz at Subiaco in 1465. Twenty-five years later another proprietary type was cut, Ptolomy, modelled on the type used by Holle of Ulm in 1482. Hornby used the same sources for paper and ink as Morris did. In the choice of what to print, Hornby was partly influenced by personal taste and education and partly by the suitability of a book from a purely typographical standpoint. He particularly liked books which lent themselves to the use of coloured initials and chapter headings. The title pages were always restrained and unadorned but later Sydney Cockerell's wife Florence Kingsford and Graily Hewitt, the well-known calligrapher did coloured initials, Eric Gill designed illustrations and Douglas Cockerell designed elegant bindings. Hornby, like Morris, tried to emulate the qualities of fifteenth century books. He maintained a standard equal to the Kelmscott without any thought of financial reward, and when his Press closed in 1935, he just managed to break even. Ironically, St. John Hornby's influence on the private press movement pales in comparison to his influence on the commercial printing business. As director of W.H. Smith, he hired such men as Eric Gill, Joseph Thorp and Bernard Newdigate, thereby raising the standards of twentieth century commercial printing.

Hornby, Joseph. The Journal of Joseph Hornby. [Hertfordshire], Ashendene Press, 1895.

Caslon pica type. This is the first book from the garden house at Ashendene printed by St. John Hornby and his sisters. Limited edition of 33 copies.

Spenser, Edmund. The Faerie Queene. Chelsea, Ashendene Press, 1923.

Limited edition of 180 copies. Bound by W.H. Smith (probably by Douglas Cockerell of W.H. Smith) in vellum boards, leather back.

ERAGNY PRESS (1894-1914)

The French artist, Lucien Pissarro, founder of the Eragny Press, was particularly interested in designing woodcuts, but had little success getting his work recognized in France. He and his wife came to England anticipating that the English would be more receptive. Shortly after his arrival, he met Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon who were currently working on The Dial. Impressed with Pissarro's work, they invited him to contribute illustrations to The Dial and later published a portfolio of his woodcuts. Pissarro could not make a living as an artist in England either, and in 1894, he purchased a press and, without any training at all, began to print. Called Eragny after Pissarro's village in Normandy, the Press was housed first in Epping then in Bedford Park and finally in Hammersmith. Charles Ricketts allowed Pissaro to use his Vale type on the understanding that the Vale Press actually print the books although they would carry the press mark of Eragny. This worked satisfactorily for the first fifteen books. After the Vale Press closed in 1904, Pissarro designed his own Brook type (named after the house in which he worked and lived) and books after 1904 use this proprietary type. Pissarro and his wife did all the designs, woodcuts and, until they could afford a pressman, the printing.

The Eragny books had a charm and freshness unlike any other press. This was the first press to experiment with coloured engravings on vellum. The books were bound in paper boards with flowery designs. A majority of the books were in French or were translations of French works. The Eragny books were highly praised and Pissarro was commissioned to produce books for the Société du Livre Contemporain and the Société des Cent Bibliophiles. In spite of this success, the press never provided the income Pissarro needed and he relied on his father for financial support until the Press was well established. Many of Pissarro's patrons were in Europe and when the First World War broke out Pissarro was forced to close the Press.

Ronsard, Pierre de. Abrégé de l'Art poétique françois. London, Hacon & Ricketts, 1903.

Limited edition of 226 copies on Arches hand-made paper.

Verhaeren, Emile. Les Petits Vieux. London, Hacon & Ricketts [1901]

Limited edition of 230 copies on Japanese paper, in black and red. Woodcut by Lucien Pissarro.

VALE PRESS (1896-1904)

Charles Ricketts, like William Morris, was a man of many parts, an artist, wood engraver, stage designer and etcher. Although he had designed books before he started the Vale Press in 1896, he wanted total control over production. He had intended to set up the press in his house, The Vale, in Chelsea but the zoning laws forbade a commercial establishment. He, therefore, arranged for a press and workmen at the commercial printers, Ballantyne Press, to be reserved for printing Vale books under his personal supervision. John Lane was his publisher; W.L. Hacon provided financial backing and Ricketts supervised production.

Ricketts, like Pissarro, designed everything himself: watermark, borders and decorations, wood engravings, bindings and types. He used three type founts: The Vale, the King, and the Avon. Although he admired Kelmscott books, he evolved his own aesthetic ideal and applied it fastidiously to the Vale Press books. His aim was "to give a permanent and beautiful form to that portion of our literature which is secure of permanence."[2]

Although more restrained and modest than Kelmscott books, Vale books are comparable. Both Morris and Ricketts enjoyed designing borders, although Ricketts' were fewer and more precise. Ricketts and Burne-Jones, who illustrated Kelmscott books, believed that the illustrations should be an integral part of the text. Both artists were strongly influenced by Aubrey Beardsley and the Art Nouveau movement. Ricketts did not rely on William Morris's research, however, and used an inferior paper, which has not stood the test of time. His bindings were superior to Kelmscott's, full leather or printed paper boards similar to Eragny.

By 1900 Ricketts was tiring of his Press and after a fire at Ballantyne Press destroyed his original blocks, electrotypes, borders, initials and decorations, he decided to close the Vale Press. In 1903 he tossed his punches and matrices of his type, and the type itself into the Thames, keeping only enough type to print Bibliography of Books Printed at Hacon and Ricketts (1904). Even this type was later melted down. During its short existence, the Vale Press produced forty-six titles, including a thirty-nine volume set of Shakespeare. Unlike many private press books, they were advertised and sold with efficiency and considerable success. Although critics felt that the application of Rickett's aesthetic made his books 'precious' rather than fine, nevertheless his contribution to modern book production was this emphasis on consistency of design achieved by total control over the production of the book.

Field, Michael. The Race of Leaves. [London, Hacon & Ricketts, 1901]

Limited edition of 280 copies. Vale type, red and black. Bound in boards covered with a paper representing dead leaves designed by C. Ricketts.

Ricketts, Charles. Bibliography of the Books Published by Hacon and Ricketts. [London], Vale Press, 1904.

Printed in Vale, Avon and King's type, black and red. Borders designed by C. Keats. Frontispiece engraved in C. Ricketts after the signboard painted by C.H. Shannon for the Vale premises. This is the last book printed at the Vale Press.

2. Roderick Cave. The Private Press. (London, 1971) p. 151.

## CASE II

DOVES PRESS (1900-1917)

Seven years after he established the Doves Bindery, the eminent binder, Thomas James Cobden-Sanderson, anxious to be involved in all aspects of book production, went into partnership with Emery Walker and established the Doves Press in 1900. Walker supplied all the technical expertise and Cobden-Sanderson supplied his wife's money and his enthusiasm. The name Doves was taken from the nearby Doves Public House - a landmark on the Thames. Cobden-Sanderson was a great admirer of William Morris and originally set up the Doves Bindery to bind Kelmscott books. With missionary zeal, he founded the Doves Press to "attack the problem of typography as presented by the ordinary book" and to "attempt its solution by the simple arrangement of the whole book, as a whole, with due regard to its parts and to the emphasis of its capital divisions rather than addition and splendour of applied ornament."[3] Emery Walker designed the Doves type based on the roman type used by Nicholas Jenson in the 1476 edition of Pliny. The Doves books clearly show the influence of Walker in the placement of type on the page, the blackness of the impression, and the close spacing of the lines of text. The Doves pages were undecorated, but calligraphers Edward Johnston or Graily Hewitt occasionally supplied an exquisite coloured initial. The Doves Bindery was an integral part of the Press. The books were usually bound in dark vellum, without ties, or occasionally in blue boards with vellum backs. Unlike the Kelmscott books, the Doves books opened easily and handled well. Occasionally Cobden-Sanderson would do a finely crafted binding himself for a presentation copy. The content of the books had also to meet Cobden-Sanderson's high serious purpose. No frivolous works or fiction were published and while other presses only considered printing the Bible, Cobden-Sanderson was obsessed with printing a magnificent edition.

After a number of disagreements, Walker and Cobden-Sanderson dissolved partnership in 1909, on the understanding that the Doves type would become the property of Walker should the Press close, or Cobden-Sanderson die. Cobden-Sanderson continued alone but, when he closed the Press in 1917, he could not bear the thought of another person using the Doves type and he cast the punches and matrices of the type and the type itself into the Thames. The Doves Press by its strict adherence to principles of design, combined with its use of superb materials and workmanship did more than any other press of that period to influence printing in the twentieth century.

Bible. English Authorized. The English Bible. Vol. 1. Hammersmith, Printed by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson & Emery Walker at the Dove Press, 1903.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. Faust. Vol. 1. Hammersmith, Printed by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson & Emery Walker at the Doves Press, 1906.

Limited to 250 copies. Signed by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson. Bound by T.J. Cobden-Sanderson, 1917.

3. Will Ransom. Kelmscott, Doves and Ashendene. (New York, 1952) p. 72.

DUN EMER PRESS (1903-1908)

Dun Emer Press began in 1903 as the printing branch of Dun Emer Industries, founded by Evelyn Gleeson to fulfil a wish to "find work for Irish girls in the making of beautiful things."[4] The name was taken from Lady Emer, famous in Irish tradition for her embroidery, embroidering being an important part of Dun Emer Industries. Evelyn Gleeson invited Elizabeth Corbett Yeats (daughter of John Butler Yeats and sister of William Butler Yeats) to organize the Press. While the Yeats lived in London during the 1890s, the family had been part of the William Morris circle and had come into contact with those involved in the Kelmscott Press. Elizabeth Yeats, encouraged by Emery Walker, took a printing course at the Women's Printing Society in London, and after returning to Ireland to run Dun Emer Press she continued to seek Walker's advice. The work of Dun Emer Press was all done by women - Elizabeth and two assistants. The books printed by Dun Emer were small quartos on crisp, light Irish paper, printed in fourteen point Caslon type with wide margins and a red colophon. The bindings were simple blue or brown paper boards. The Press not only printed books but also calendars, greeting cards, bookplates and notices.

Elizabeth Yeats made the Press a family endeavour. Her brother, William was the literary editor, and the Press became a vehicle for the Irish literary revival. The literary policy was to print new works of living Irish writers, including Lady Gregory, AE (George Russell), and Yeats himself and new editions or translations of Irish classics. During the three years it used the Dun Emer imprint, the Press printed eleven books as well as ephemera. In 1908, the Press separated from the Dun Emer Industries, moved to Churchtown near Dundrum in County Dublin, and began printing under the name Cuala Press. Under this imprint it continued until 1946, and after a long cessation, it began printing again in the 1960s. The printing of Dun Emer had no pretentions of being fine printing to rival the Kelmscott or Doves Presses, although the work is technically sound. The merit of the books lay in their content and in the contribution they made to the renaissance of Irish literature.

A Broadside. No. 1, June 1908. Dundrum, Dun Emer Press.

Illustrated by Jack B. Yeats.

That Joy May Come and Joy May Go. Dublin, Dun Emer Guild, 19--

Yeats, William Butler. The stories of Red Hanrahan. Dundrum, Dun Emer Press, 1904.

SHAKESPEARE HEAD PRESS (1904-1944?)

The well known editor and publisher, Arthur Henry Bullen, founded the Shakespeare Head Press in 1904 for the express purpose of printing a magnifi-

4. Liam Miller. The Dun Emer Press, later the Cuala Press. (Dublin, 1973) p. 15.

cent edition of the works of Shakespeare, composed, printed and bound by Stratford men in Stratford-upon-Avon. Following the completion of Shakespeare's works, he broadened his literary policy to include classical works and writings of modern authors. When Bullen died in 1920, Basil Blackwell and his partner Mott took over the business. Blackwell admired the Kelmscott books for their fine paper and printing excellence, and he tried to emulate these ideas by using the best materials in his own printing. Bernard Newdigate was engaged as designer and, under his direction, books of the highest quality were printed. He used Caslon type, with decorations or woodcut illustrations as appropriate. The bindings were simple - blue or brown paper boards. In 1930 the Press moved to Oxford and continued there until it ceased during the Second World War. These books give the distinct impression of care, planning, taste and thought for the reader.

Four One-Act Plays. Oxford, B. Blackwell, Publisher to the Shakespeare Head Press of Stratford-upon-Avon, 1923.

Fifty copies printed on Kelmscott hand made paper. Signed by the authors.

Pindarus. Epinikia. Vol. 1. Oxford, Printed at the Shakespeare Head Press, Stratford and published by B. Blackwell, 1928.

Limited edition of 250 copies. Wood engravings by John Farleigh.

## CASE III

FLYING FAME (1912-1913)

Lovat Fraser, Ralph Hodgson, and Holbrook Jackson pooled the sum of £5.00 each and their literary and artistic talents to launch the publishing venture, Flying Fame, at the end of 1912. Holbrook Jackson handled publicity and helped with typography. Ralph Hodgson contributed his poems and those of his friends; and Lovat Fraser did the bulk of the work, including the layout and the illustrations, as well as searching for quaint types. Printing, block making, and binding were done by a professional, A.T. Stevens. The Flying Fame specialized in poetry chapbooks and broadsides. The type used was Old English Fatface, the illustrations were done in vibrant primary colours outlined in black and are similar to those of Jack B. Yeats. The bindings were usually paper wrappers of Japan vellum. Fraser showed exceptional talent for visualising type and illustration as a whole. Apart from their charm and attractiveness, the Flying Fame publications were of literary importance since a number of poems by Ralph Hodgson, James Stephens, Richard Honeywood were first issued under this imprint. This promising private press ceased when the First World War broke out.

Hodgson, Ralph. The Birdcatcher. London, Printed by A.T. Stevens for Flying Fame [ca. 1913]

Hodgson, Ralph. Playmates. London, Printed by A.T. Stevens for Flying Fame [ca. 1913].

ST. DOMINIC'S PRESS (1916-1936)

Harry (Hilary) Clark Pepler, founder of St. Dominic's Press wrote: "I founded the Press in 1916 in order to earn my living by printing by hand myself rather than by employing others to print for me. I use Old Caslon because it seems to me the most legible and decent. I seldom print more than 500 copies of anything ..."[5] Before moving to Ditchling to set up the Press, Pepler lived in Hammersmith where his neighbours were Edward Johnston, Eric Gill, T.J. Cobden-Sanderson and Emery Walker. When he started the Press, Cobden-Sanderson gave him encouragement, and later, Edward Johnston and Eric Gill were to help illustrate his publications. The name of the Press reflects the influence of the Dominican Order on Pepler, a recent convert to Roman Catholicism. Pepler used a Stanhope hand press purported to have belonged to William Morris, two founts of Caslon type and hand made paper from Joseph Batchelor. Later other presses and founts were added. Pepler learned printing from a retired master printer, "Old Dawes", who used Caxton's methods including making his own ink, and initially, Pepler adhered to these primitive traditions.

Pepler intended to print anything from missals to stationary. His first job was printing a beer label for a local brewery. He also intended to print books which he felt were in danger of disappearing. His press did not aim at fine printing. He set his own type, and was one of the first to print books with unjustified lines. His books had a simple grace and homespun quality, which added to their charm. He firmly believed that the proper medium of illustration for hand printed books was engraved wood blocks, and called on Eric Gill to do many of the delightful woodcuts. Although the Press had initially been a financial success, during the Depression it began to lose money, and in 1936, Pepler turned the business over to his partner Cyril Costick, his son Mark, and his son-in-law, Gerard Falkner. The new owners moved the Press from Ditchingly Common to Ditchling Village, where Pepler had begun, and renamed it the Ditchling Press.

Cornford, Frances. Autumn Midnight. London, Poetry Bookshop, 1923.

Printed at St. Dominic's Press, Ditchling, Sussex. Wood-engravings by Eric Gill.

Pepler, Hilary Douglas Clark. God and the Dragon. Ditchling, Sussex, D. Pepler, 1917.

Engravings by Eric Gill, except p. 9 and 14 by R. Beedham.

Pepler, Hilary Douglas Clark. Libellus Lapidum. Ditchling, Sussex, S. Dominic's Press, 1924.

5. Geoffrey S. Tompkins. A Select Bibliography of the Principal Modern Presses Public and Private in Great Britain and Ireland. (London, 1928) p. 224.

BEAUMONT PRESS (1917-1931)

The bookseller Cyril Beaumont, inspired by the examples of Morris, Hornby and Cobden-Sanderson, set up a printing press in his Charing Cross Road bookshop in 1917. He originally intended to print the works of contemporary authors, in a distinguished form; later, he went so far as to make the physical presentation of each book represent its literary contents . He engaged first rate artists and designers, like Ethelbert White and Paul Nash. The Beaumont Press printed new works of D.H. Lawrence, Walter De La Mare and Oscar Wilde. Beaumont used Caslon type and bound his books in decorated paper boards which he designed especially for each edition. Often his title pages have attractive vignettes which attempt to capture the mood of the work. Most of the works were published in two editions: trade and limited. The Beaumont Press printed twenty-six books before economic conditions forced Beaumont to close the Press in 1931.

New Path: Verse, Prose, Pictures, 1917-1918. Edited by C.W. Beaumont and M.T.H. Sadler. Decorated by Anne Estelle Rice. London, C.W. Beaumont, 1918.

Limited edition of 100 copies on finest cartridge paper. Hand coloured illustrations.

Wilde, Oscar. After Berneval: Letters of Oscar Wilde to Robert Ross. London, Beaumont Press, 1922.

Cover and decorations designed by Randolph Schwabe. Typography and binding arranged by C.W. Beaumont.

Wilde, Oscar. After Reading: Letters of Oscar Wilde to Robert Ross. London, Beaumont Press, 1921.

Decorations designed and cut on wood by Ethelbert White. Typography and binding arranged by C.W. Beaumont.

HOGARTH PRESS (founded 1917)

When Leonard and Virginia Woolf started the Hogarth Press in 1917, it was intended purely as a diversion to distract Virginia from her intense and exhausting absorption in her writing. The Woolfs attempted to take printing classes at St. Brides, but quickly withdrew because amateurs were not welcome. Instead, they bought a small pamphlet on printing and purchased a small hand platen press which they installed on their dining-room table at Hogarth House, Richmond. After practising printing for a month, they felt experienced enough to print their first book. Considering their lack of experience, the first effort was creditable, and they attempted to make it attractive by binding it in bright Japanese paper. No attempt was made to print fine books. Their chief interest was the text and they published the works of such contemporary literary figures as T.S. Eliot, E.M. Forster, Edith Sitwell as well as Virginia Woolf's own works. The response to their first publications was so enthusiastic that they had to be reprinted by a commercial press. Many of the subsequent Hogarth publications were also commercially printed, but until the

1930s, some limited editions were still printed by hand at their home which, by that time, was Tavistock Square. The Hogarth Press inspired future writers to print their own works, but never did another literary press develop into such a successful business.

Woolf, Virginia. Monday of Tuesday. With woodcuts by Vanessa Bell. Richmond, Published by L. & V. Woolf at the Hogarth Press, 1921.

## CASE IV

GOLDEN COCKEREL PRESS (founded 1920)

The Golden Cockerel Press was started by Harold Midgley Taylor as a cooperative printing venture whereby young authors would print and bind their own works. The initial efforts resulted in poorly inked type, bad paper and shoddy bindings. Quickly these authors/printers lost interest, and Taylor and his wife were left to carry on the printing alone. Taylor hired professional staff and decided to publish fine editions of books of "established worth". The books published by Taylor were pleasant but unmemorable. In 1924, Robert Gibbings bought the Golden Cockerel Press. He was a founding member of the Society of Wood-Engravers and under his direction the Press became a forerunner for the renaissance of wood engraved book illustration. Although Gibbings did many of the illustrations himself, he also commissioned noted artists such as Eric Gill, John Nash and David Jones. He designed a proprietary type named after the Press. During the Depression, the Press began to lose money and Gibbings sold it to Christopher Sanford, Francis Newbery, and Owen Rutter. Sanford promptly disbanded the printing operations, sold the printing equipment, and engaged Chiswick Press, under the supervision of Frances Newberry, to do the printing. Christopher Sanford did the book designing and hired first rate artists from England and Europe to do the book illustration. Consequently, the books printed in the third and final phase of the Press were also excellent, and indicate that the Press was still in the forefront of book illustration.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. The Canterbury Tales. With wood engravings by Eric Gill. Vol. 4. Waltham Saint Lawrence, Berkshire, Golden Cockerel Press, 1931.

Limited edition of 500 copies. Printed in Caslon, black, red and blue. Batchelor hand made paper with Cockerel watermark. Bound by Sangorski and Sutcliffe, London.

Homer. The Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite. A new translation by F.L. Lucas. With ten engravings by Mark Severin. London, Golden Cockerel Press, 1948.

Limited edition of 720 copies. Poliphilus Roman and New Hellenic Greek types, red and black. Arnold's mould-made paper.

GREGYNOG PRESS (1923-1940)

Gregynog was a mock-Tudor house in the wild part of Montgomeryshire, in Wales. It was owned by two wealthy spinsters, Gwendoline and Margaret Davies, who made it a haven for artists and musicians to live and work creatively. Originally they planned to set up a craft workshop where weaving, carving, printing and binding would be done. In fact, Gregynog concentrated on printing and binding. In 1923 the sisters, who were not directly involved in the printing operation other than to hire talented people and underwrite all the costs, hired Robert Maynard as manager to supervise the work. The aims of the Press were in the great tradition: to introduce and encourage fine printing in Wales, to print Welsh classics in the original or in English, to print editions of English classics and finally to spare no expense to produce fine works of art giving attention to decoration, typography and binding. During the history of the Press there were four managers and numerous changes in personnel and yet the unity of design and quality of execution remained constant. All the type was hand set usually using Monotype faces with a simple style of type; often coloured initials and illustrations were used. Although not unique in printing illustrated books, Gregynog had a greater proportion of illustrated books than most presses at that time. It was unique, however, in that it did publish books in the Welsh language. Its bindings were beautifully designed and crafted by George Fisher. When it closed in 1940, the Gregynog Press had printed forty-five books of the highest quality. It, more than any other press, imitated the ideals of the aristocratic press of the eighteenth century, where time and money could be lavished on each book without any thought of cost.

Bridges, Robert. Eros and Psyche. With wood-cuts from designs by Edward Burne-Jones. [Newton, Wales], Gregynog, 1935.

Limited edition of 300 copies on Kelmscott paper. Calligraphy by Graily Hewitt. The type was also designed by Hewitt and is used here for the first and only time. The wood-cuts by Burne-Jones were originally designed for Earthly Paradise, by William Morris but never used.

Hartzenbusch, Juan Eugenio. The Lovers of Teruel. [Newton, Wales], Gregynog, 1938.

Bound in red niger morocco. Covers finished with a blind design of interlacing strapwork.

NONESUCH PRESS (founded 1923)

Frances Meynell, his wife Vera Mendell, and David Garnett founded the Nonesuch Press with the aim of producing books for book collectors who read. It had its start in the cellar of the Birrell and Garnett Bookshop, and was named after the Tudor Palace of Nonesuch. Garnett was the literary editor and he chose to publish books which had never been printed before, or were currently out of print, or for which existing editions were inadequate.

Nonesuch was not a press in Kelmscott or Doves tradition. It published books but it did not print them, preferring that to be done by a variety of good commercial printers. Meynell was in charge of book design and he refused to adopt any house style, choosing rather to take advantage of the best that was available at the various printers he used. Nonesuch did have its own small printing plant where experimental pages for press books were printed and where, occasionally, whole books were composed and printed. Meynell was one of the most successful general book designers England has known and all the books published by Nonesuch reflected the perfectionist spirit of the private press movement as well as Meynell's own ideas of book design.

Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de. Don Quixote de la Mancha. London, Nonesuch Press [1930]

Motteux's translation revised (1743) and corrected by J. Ozell. Illustrations by E. McKnight Kauffer.

Voltaire, François Marie Arouet de. The Princess of Babylon. With decorations by Thomas Lowinsky. London, Nonesuch, 1927.

SEIZIN PRESS (1928-1939)

When Laura Rider and Robert Graves had difficulty getting their poetry published, they decided to establish their own press in Hammersmith in 1928. Graves chose the name of the Press from the definition of seizin given in Roget's Thesaurus: "of possession of the ground of life, for making good come into words". Rider and Graves cared much more about text than design and consequently the typography and layout are usually simple and unadorned with wide margins, allowing the reader to read the poems easily. In order to make the books attractive, Len Lye designed some bright and decorative bindings.

In 1929 the couple left England and finally settled in Deyá, Majorca, where they continued to print despite difficulties procuring printing supplies. Finally, Rider arranged for the publishing to be done by Constable of London under the imprint Seizin Press-Constable, although she and Graves would decide what authors would be published. During the Spanish Civil War the activities of the Press were suspended and when the couple parted in 1939, the Press was handed over to Graves. His separation from Laura Rider had killed the spirit of the Seizin Press for Graves and, after the Second World War, he sold the equipment.

Graves, Robert. Poems, 1929. London, Seizin Press, 1929.

Limited edition of 225 copies. Signed by the author.

Graves, Robert. To Whom Else? Deyá, Majorca, Seizin Press, 1931.

Limited edition of 200 copies. Signed by the author.

CASE V

STANBROOK ABBEY PRESS (founded 1876)

The Stanbrook Abbey Press at Callow End, Worcester is operated by the enclosed order of Benedictine nuns of Stanbrook Abbey. The Press, started in 1876 with a single hand press, is the oldest surviving private press in England and one of the most distinguished in Europe. The original purpose of the Press was to supply the printing needs of the English Benedictine congregation and from time to time to print works of sound spiritual or intellectual value. From the beginning the Press was an integral part of the nuns' life of dedication and prayer. During its early days the Press received advice from such notables as Emery Walker, St. John Hornby, Robert Gibbings and Sir Sydney Cockerell, who became one of its great benefactors.

The work of the Press has always been technically competent although its early efforts were not particularly distinguished and during the Second World War, consideration was given to selling the printing equipment. Fortunately, that decision was not carried out and in 1955 Dame Hildelith Cummings was appointed printer. Her natural flair for typographical design revitalized the Press. In 1957 Jan van Krimpen, the eminent Dutch type-designer and fine calligrapher, visited the Abbey. His visit and further communication with the Stanbrook printer greatly influenced the format of the publications and today the Press regularly uses three of his types. All fine printing and small jobs are set by hand but books of any length or complexity are sent to a commercial typesetter to be done on a Monotype machine.

Although the emphasis is naturally on religious works, the Press also prints literary works, illustrated broadsides and ephemera, including Christmas and Easter greeting cards. The small editions are decorated with illuminations by Margaret Adams. Care is also taken with the binding. Some editions have bindings designed by George Percival of Leicester; while others are bound in attractive Japanese patterned paper. The Stanbrook Abbey Press is an excellent example of the production of a modern private press and is remarkable for its quality and beauty.

Maritain, Raïssa. Patriarch Tree. Translated into English by a Benedictine of Stanbrook, with a preface by Robert Speaight. Worcester, Stanbrook Abbey Press, 1965.

Limited edition of 550 copies. Handset in Jan van Krimpen's Romanée type on Barcham Green's Eltham hand made paper. Bound by George Percival of Leicester.

Masefield, Judith. Mary's Weaving. [Worcester, Stanbrook Abbey Press, 1973]

Limited edition of 300 copies. Handset in monotype Lutetia on Saunder's mould-made paper with Japanese paper covers.

Milward, Peter. Peter. [Worcester, Stanbrook Abbey Press], 1977.

Limited edition of 75 copies. Handset in monotype Lutetia on Barcham Green's Maidstone handmade paper with Japanese patterned paper covers.

RAMPANT LIONS PRESS (founded 1949)

The founder of Rampant Lions Press, Will Carter, had been an active amateur printer since the age of twelve. When he became a professional printer, he worked first for Unwin Brothers and later for Heffers in Cambridge. While employed at Heffers, he bought his own press and did jobbing work for friends and associates as well as printing a number of small books for himself. After a stint in the army during the Second World War, he opened his own printing firm in 1949, convinced that there was a market for fine jobbing printing. His skill and taste were remarkable and, by 1959, he was so successful that he could concentrate on printing books of his choice. His son Sebastian, following in his father's footsteps, began printing at age thirteen and later joined his father's firm where he is now a partner. The Rampant Lions Press is, of course, commercial but the work is done in a way which entirely satisfies the idealistic standard of printing and design of the private press movement.

Bridson, D.G. The Quest of Gilgamesh. With an original lithograph by Michael Ayrton. [Cambridge, Eng.], Rampant Lions Press, 1977.

Limited edition of 125 copies. Designed and printed by Will and Sebastian Carter. Type is monotype Octavian. Marbled paper was made by Ingeborg Börjeson of Sweden. Bound by Mansells.

Morris, William. William Morris: the Story of Cupid and Psyche. With wood-engravings designed by Edward Burne-Jones and mostly engraved by William Morris. London, Clover Hill Editions, 1974.

Text and engravings were designed by Will and Sebastian Carter at the Rampant Lions Press, Cambridge, in Kelmscott Troy type on paper made by J. Barcham Green. Bound by John P. Gray, Cambridge.

TRAGARA PRESS (founded 1954)

Alan Anderson, an antiquarian book dealer, became interested in printing after some years of book collecting in the fields of modern literature and private press books. He learned printing at the Edinburgh College of Art and in 1954, when he set up his press, it was to be a hobby. His involvement in it grew steadily until 1974 when he gave up his antiquarian book business and became a full time printer. The name of the press is taken from a corner of the island of Capri called Tragara where the Andersons enjoy vacationing. Most of the books are handset and quite simply designed by Anderson himself. He chooses to print books which

reflect his own interests, and consequently, one third of the books are related to the literature of the late nineteenth century.

Ricketts, Charles. Michael Field. Edited by Paul Delaney. Edinburgh, Tragara Press, 1976.

Limited edition of 125 copies set in Bembo type and printed by hand.

Sitwell, Sacheverell. Hand and Eye. Edited by Geoffrey Elborn. Edinburgh, Tragara Press, 1977.

Limited edition of 175 copies hand-set in Bembo type.

TAURUS PRESS OF WILLOWDENE (founded 1959)

This Press was started by its American owner, Paul Peter Piech in 1959. He does the printing himself and the illustrations, occasionally collaborating with another artist. This Press is of interest because he uses his Press to make political statements or comment on social problems. This is done particularly through his vigorous, colourful illustrations which portray the suffering of man.

Owen, Wilfred. 10 War Poems. Willowdene, Bushey Heath, Taurus Press, 1959.

Limited edition of 32 copies. Illustrations by Nigel Lambourne and Paul Peter Piech. Signed by the artists.

## CASE VI

BREWHOUSE PRESS (founded 1962)

Leicestershire became for printing in the 1960s what Hammersmith had been in the 1890s. Printers and artist came together to experiment with book design and illustration, and the most influential person at the centre of this movement was Rigby Graham. One of his protégés was Trevor Hickman, a binder by trade, who established the Brewhouse Press in 1962. The Press took its name from the old brewhouse attached to Hickman's home in Wymondham where the Press is located. Although some of the books are printed at outside presses many are produced on equipment no more sophisticated than a nipping press. All of the books are original in their design and creative in their use of illustration. Rigby Graham illustrates many of the works himself, or in collaboration with others. Hickman takes more interest than most printers in the bindings of his books, doing the binding himself. The Brewhouse Press is one of the most active and substantial presses in Britain today.

Holt, Penelope and Thorpe, Edmond. Gold and Books. Illustrated by Rigby Graham. Wydmondham, Brewhouse Press, c1969.

Limited to 250 copies. Binding and gold stamping by Trevor Hickman.

Graham, Patricia. The Brewhouse at Wymondham. Illustrated by Rigby Graham. [Wymondham, Brewhouse Press, 1974]

Limited to 90 copies for private circulation.

James, Mervyn. Mountains. Illustrated by Rigby Graham. Wymondham, Trevor Hickman at the Brewhouse Press, c1972.

Limited to 200 copies. Illustrations are line drawings and auto-lithographs.

COG PRESS (founded 1963)

Rigby Graham somehow found time in 1963 to establish his own press, Cog, in Leicester. It was to be a small experimental press with a light-hearted approach to the craft and no definite objectives. Although the Cog Press specializes in printing ephemera, occasionally books are designed and illustrated by Graham. These are small editions and even a smaller number are offered for sale.

Flores, Charles. Correspondence. With Monotypes by Rigby Graham. [Leicester], Cog Press, 1973.

Limited edition of 150 copies. Bound by Trevor Hickman.

Lissauer, Frank and Graham, Rigby. Ireland. [Leicester, Cog Press, 1975]

Limited edition of 120 copies. Illustrated by Graham Rigby. Bound by Trevor Hickman.

BLACK KNIGHT PRESS (founded 1964)

The Black Knight Press was opened in Bath by Duine Campbell in 1964; three years later he moved it to Leicester. There has been a steady flow of books from the Press, usually small illustrated works, handset in very limited editions on Japanese or English hand made paper. The printer successfully weds the text with illustration from wood engravings, etchings or linocuts. Campbell does many of the illustrations himself.

Ponge, Francis. Two Prose Poems. Translated by Peter Hoy. Illustrations by Penelope Campbell. [Leicester, Black Knight, 1968]

Limited to 120 copies. Handset and printed by Duine Campbell.

NEW BROOM PRESS (founded ca. 1967)

Another Leicester press which started in the 1960's is Toni Savage's New Broom Press. It concentrates on printing poetry by contemporary authors, illustrated by young artists. In addition to books, single poems have been printed for Christmas and a number of broadsheets, with illustrations designed particularly to complement the poem on each broadsheet.

Graham, Rigby. Some Irish Drawings. Leicester, Toni Savage, 1980.

Limited to 80 copies. Signed by the author.

Potocki de Montalk, Geoffrey. Wild Asparagus. Illustrated by Rigby Graham. [Leicester, New Broom Press, 1979]

CASE VII

WILD HAWTHORN PRESS (founded ca. 1962)

The Wild Hawthorn Press, founded by Ian Hamilton Finlay in Dunsyre, Lanark, Scotland, is in no sense a craft press but has been included because it is the principal stronghold for the international movement known as concrete poetry. Finlay, long in rebellion against established literary taste, chiefly prints his own poetry and texts by poets from Europe and both North and South America. Concrete poetry, being visual poetry and therefore in a sense about typography, should encourage concrete poets to use highly original formats for their work. More often than not, the publishers of concrete poetry tend to rely on the typewriter or letraset. Not so Hamilton: the publications from his Press are vibrant and creative using a variety of type, format, colour and illustration to carry his message. Most of the printing is done by hand at the Salamander Press.

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Airs, Waters, Graces. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 1975]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Boat Yard. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Estuary Cupboards. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Fishing News News. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Flags. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. A Heartshape. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Homage to Kandinsky. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Homage to Walter Reekie's Ring Netter. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press], 1972.

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Iron Ship. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. They Returned Home Tired but Happy. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

Finlay, Ian Hamilton. Wild Hawthorn Wonder Book of Boats. [Dunsyre, Lanark, Wild Hawthorn Press, 197-?]

WHITTINGTON PRESS (founded 1971)

John and Rosalind Randle started the Whittington Press at their home in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, as a hobby in 1971 with the intention of printing original illustrated books in limited editions. By 1974, the hobby had grown into a full time occupation. The press prints well-designed books, illustrated with charming wood engravings, etchings, mezzotints, line blocks, or lithographs. Nearly all the books are handset and no more than 500 copies are printed.

Craig, Edward Gordon. The Last Eight Years, 1958-1966. Edited with an introduction by Edward Craig, & with two wood engravings by John Craig. [Andoversford, Whittington Press, 1983]

Matrix. No. 1 (Autumn 1981). [Andoversford], Whittington Press, 1981.

Wood-engravings by Miriam Macgregor.

CYGNET PRESS (founded 1974)

The Cygnet Press was started in an out-building at Burford in the fall of 1974 by Simon Rendall. Like so many, he set the press up merely to print for pleasure and to print as well as he could using good paper and type. The Press has printed works for authors and collectors as well as poetry of the printer's own choice.

Brooke, Rupert. Rupert Brooke. With notes on the manuscripts by Geoffrey Keynes. Burford, Cygnet Press, 1978.

Limited edition of 250 copies.

CIRCLE PRESS (founded 1967)

One of the pioneers in the revival of interest in the Livre d'artiste in Britain is Ronald King, who in 1967 formed Circle Press in Guildford. The Press produces artists' editions of both classical and contemporary texts and is largely responsible for the new interest in artists' work among both British artists and collectors. Ronald King, an artist himself, revels in all aspects of printing and has been known to actually print many of the volumes himself. He also creates many of the works, choosing the design, text and illustrations. Other works have resulted from the coming together of poet and artist under King's guidance. Many of the texts used are previously unpublished and of interest to collectors.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. With original screen images designed by Ronald King. [Guildford, Circle Press Publications, 1978]

Limited edition of 250 copies. Signed by tha artist.

PLOUGH PRESS (founded 1967)

Although started in Leicestershire in 1967, the Plough Press was never part of the private press movement which centred on Rigby Graham. Its founder, Geoffrey Wakeman, is a specialist printer, publishing in his spare time. Wakeman was taught hand printing by Philip Gaskell at the College Press in Glasgow. The Plough Press limits its field to books on printing history and paper making. The name of the Press was derived from its first publication, Share of Ploughs (1968). Geoffrey Wakeman does all the research and writing of the text himself. The books, whenever possible, are printed and bound by hand, but occasionally the more complicated productions are done by commercial firms. He aims for perfection, and that being very costly, the books consequently are extremely expensive and usually end up in the hands of specialist collectors and institutions in North America.

Wakeman, Geoffrey. The Production of Nineteenth Century Colour Illustrations. [Leicester], Plough Press, 1976.

Limited edition of 100 copies.

BASILISK PRESS (founded 1974)

The Basilisk Press and Bookshop is unique in the post war private press movement. Its owner, Charlene Garry, not only publishes fine books but opened a bookshop to sell them. Founded in 1974, the Press has become a successful undertaking. Garry publishes luxurious editions requiring a capital investment far beyond the means of the majority of contemporary private press owners. While admitting no private press today can equal a Doves or Kelmscott, Garry sets out to produce facsimile editions of fine books which come as close as possible to their standard. Another important

aspect of her publishing policy has been to issue previously unpublished material from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries related to botany and gardening. Garry does all the research, commissions artists and writers, and designs the books herself, but all printing, plate-making and binding is done by the best commercial firms. Only material that can be printed so accurately that it is virtually indistinguishable from the original has been published by the Basilisk Press.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer. [London], Printed for Basilisk Press by John Roberts Press Clerkenwell, 1974.

Limited edition of 515 copies. Facsimile of the Kelmscott Chaucer. Blocks made by John Swain and Son, London. Paper made specially by Saint Cuthbert's Mill at Wells. Cloth has been printed by Liberty and is the 'Larkspur pattern' designed by William Morris in 1874. Bound by A.W. Lumsden, Edinburgh.

Margery Pearson,
September 1983

Cover designed by Tom Reid
after a woodcut by Lionel Lindsay.

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